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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Monday, December 31, 1934.

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Subject: "When You Eat Out." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, USDA.

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A good New Year's resolution could be made about food. To this statement you would probably agree, says the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture, if you stood and watched the trays as they are filled and passed along the counter by the line of customers in almost any cafeteria. Perhaps you would share the view of some dietitians -- that better standards of living, including better health for the world in general depend upon better selection of foods as well as upon better incomes with which to buy.

Here is a true story, with a moral which is plain. It was set down by a trained home economist who made the observation herself:

In one of our state agricultural college cafeterias, supervised by a trained dietitian, the students could buy their meals at prices barely more than cost. Five to 8 cents for vegetables, 14 and 15 cents for meats and salads, were the highest prices on the menu. At breakfast they had a choice of five or six fruits, four or five cereals, four or five kinds of bread or rolls, three beverages, and eggs or bacon. For luncheon they could choose from three beverages, a soup, four or five hot vegetables, four meats or other protein dishes, assorted breads and sandwiches, three or four salads, including one or more vegetable, one fruit and one meat-substitute salad, and for dessert one kind of cake, two kinds of pie, pudding and ice cream. Dinners were much the same as the lunches, except that there were no sandwiches. Here was food enough, in good variety.

The students' trays (785 men's, 880 women's) were observed over two ten-day periods, one in winter, one in summer. This was done without the students' knowing it, so their choice would be uninfluenced. The foods they selected were listed at about equal numbers of breakfasts, lunches and dinners, were then classified and tabulated, and these results were studied. They showed, first of all, very marked differences between the men's choice of foods and the women's. Something like two-thirds of the men's trays carried milk at lunch or dinner or both. The average consumption of milk was apparently more than half a pint per day for the men. Only a fifth of the women's trays carried milk at all, and they used it only once a day. Even counting milk used in cooking, these women could scarcely get as much milk as nutritionists consider necessary to furnish the calcium we need.

The men ate bread and meat more often than the women, but both chose meat once a day or more, bread two or three times. Men chose vegetables oftener than women did, but chose potatoes chiefly, with very few raw vegetables or salads.

But though the women's trays did not carry vegetables as often as did the men's, the women chose more kinds -- including raw vegetables and a good proportion of salads.

More than half the men's trays at two meals, and two-thirds to three-fourths of the women's carried desserts. Pie and ice cream were the favorites, the men's choice running most often to pie, the women's to ice cream.

Summing up her observations, the investigator found that these students did not choose their food very well. The men's meals were too light in fruits and vegetables, but nearly adequate in milk and cereals. The women's meals were too light in milk, fruits and vegetables and whole cereals, though better in raw fruits and vegetables than the men's meals.

Considering the meals as a whole, the investigator found that the energy value was low. This she found in a special study of the nutritive values of meals selected by some 50 students, men and women. A man at moderately active muscular work, nutritionists say, needs 3,000 calories a day, a woman 2,400, but a sedentary man may need less than 2,400 and a woman less than 1,800 calories. These students averaged 2,203 calories per day for the men (a range of 1,411 to 3,453), and for women 1,674. The men were up to standard for calcium and for protein, the women were more than 9 percent too low in calcium, 15 percent in protein. The difference, of course, was due chiefly to the milk and meat more freely used by the men. The men got enough phosphorus, also, from milk and the meat they ate, the women were 28 percent below standard in phosphorus.

Neither men nor women got enough iron -- the men were more than 22 percent below standard, the women more than 43 percent. The diets were generally low in vitamin C.

Remembering that these were young people who had before them every day plenty of food of all the necessary kinds, the fact that they were not well-fed suggests many things about the food habits of the rest of us as well. It is true some of these students were cramped in funds -- the choice in some cases was governed by that fact. But the rest of them had a fine opportunity to be well fed according to good dietary standards.

So what, we may wonder, happens to the general run of people, with no dietitian to choose and set before them the kinds of food we all need? What happens when we have to plan our own or the family meals? Which way does our own choice tend?

A New Year's resolution is in order. To be fair to ourselves, we need to know and to keep in mind certain principles of diet. To satisfy the needs of the human body we need foods to build the structure, to give it warmth and energy and keep it in good order. To get enough of the food substances that serve those purposes we draw upon at least five classes of food: Milk for one, vegetables and fruits for another; bread and cereals for a third; meat, fish, eggs or cheese; and finally, fats and sugars. Because there is little danger of our neglecting

bread or meat, nutritionists advise us to make sure first of all of the "protective" foods -- milk, vegetables and fruits, and, when you can afford them, eggs also. These foods will give you good value in minerals and vitamins and proteins -- will "protect" your diet, as they say. But they will leave you short in calories and wanting such mainstays as bread and meat and potatoes -- which you then should add to make up your calorie quota.

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